

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1 through 22, 37, 39, and 41 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 12, 38, 39, and 41 are the independent claims. Nonelected Claims 23 through 36 and 40 have been cancelled.

Allowed Claims

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 1 through 22 are allowable over the cited art.

Section 103 Rejection

Claims 37, 39, and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0053259 (Takeuchi, et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Traversal of Rejection

Applicants note that Takeuchi, et al. has a filing date of December 27, 2000, whereas the present application has a U.S. filing date of July 26, 2000. Since the filing date of Takeuchi, et al. is later than the U.S. filing date of the present application, Takeuchi et al. is not prior art to the application, and the rejection is not well made. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

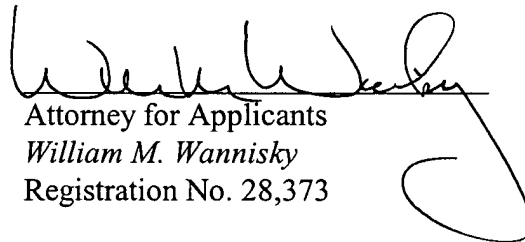
Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are allowable over the prior art and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

If there is any reason precluding the allowance of the application, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,



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